

9 August 1974

COMIREX Movie Films

Lessons Learned

1. Contracting

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STATINTL was almost doubled. Carefully investigate the practicality of contracting directly with [redacted] -- and to secure STATINTL the necessary support (typing, space, secured storage, guard service) by independent contract [redacted] just for these services. This will save [redacted] "percentage cut" of about 38 percent -- i.e. for every \$10,000 paid [redacted] also gets \$3,800 for servicing the sub-contract.

2. Preliminary Planning

Recognize that the film producer is not familiar with the subject and requires some time to "get-up to speed", to think about the project and ways of accomplishment, and to develop his questions to secure a better understanding. Accordingly, send initial textual and illustrative materials for this review to the West Coast two weeks prior to initial contract discussions. We arrived with the materials and found that our initial talks were not as useful as they could have been as the producer could not absorb the written material and commence intelligent discussions concurrently within hours after exposure to an entirely new project.

3. Editing

We reviewed the completed film on a "movieola" with the producer and film editor. Review of this loosely-edited version is useful as it allows you to see the total film exposed before sections are "edited-out" -- thus you are aware of "what's" available. Draw-back -- During this "movieola" review many problems are detected -- including synchronization of sound to scenes viewed, sequencing,

NRO review(s)
completed.

length of scenes, etc. Experience shows that it is impossible to secure a mutual understanding -- which will be remembered completely -- of all of the changes and "fine-tuning" necessary. Accordingly, strong to recommend one of the following:

1) After "movieola" review, stay-over for a few days and "supervise" the final editing to assure you get the exact results desired or,

2) Arrange to return to effect a second review of the "final edit" copy. Do not wait until first print copy has been sent to Washington -- at that stage the final negative has been made and other costly work has been completed which cannot be altered without sharp increase to original contract.

4. Sound Effects

Assure you know exactly what these effects will sound like, their intensity and effect on viewer, and where they will occur in the film. We listened to sample sound effect tracks completely independent of our film and trusted the editor producer with the sound-effect results to be achieved. In our case the sound which was to be subtle and innocuous turned out to be dominant and distracting.

5. Synchronization -- narration

The exact timing of words to scenes being viewed is critical -- the narration is recorded completely independent of the film -- further the narrator is not aware of what is being viewed. It might be useful to pre-record the sound here in draft form so that narrator has a better idea as to the proper pronunciation of unusual terms/foreign names -- and also voice emphasis desired. During the "movieola" and second edit stage -- assure that sound/scene are properly synchronized.

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6. Film Length

One criticism of our film was the fact that insufficient time was devoted to the many topics covered -- the visual audio "message" was so compacted that more than one viewing would be necessary to absorb/understand the full content. More simply, we probably should have "dwelled" longer on each topic and used 20 minutes rather than 15 to convey the message.

